

CASTLEMAINE NATURALIST

NOVEMBER 1988

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If you can't beat them, eat them. One of a series
THREE-CORNERED GARLIC

Three-cornered garlic can be found scattered through the district, and is sometimes locally abundant. Its stems are triangular in cross section, and it has drooping white flowers. Unlike onions, the leaves are flat.

Like most wild garlics, this species can be used as a substitute for garlic. It is not as strong, and it so a greater quantity (perhaps three to five times) can be used. This can be an advantage in salads, sandwiches and uncooked dishes where the milder flavour makes it superior to ordinary garlic.

The young leaves may also be used.

The scientific name of Three-cornered Garlic is *Allium triquetrum*. *Allium* is the latin name for garlic, and *triquetrum* refers to the triangular stem.

Crow Garlic (*Allium vineale*), may also be used as a garlic substitute.

The commonest and most troublesome weed from this group in my vegetable garden is the False garlic (*Nothoscordum inodorum*), which is, unfortunately inedible. It also has white flowers, but the flowers are held erect, and the stem is cylindrical.

△ Cross
Section
of Stem



SANDON EXCURSION

The Castlemaine and Mt Martha Field Naturalists joined for an excursion to the Strathlea Forest on October 15th.

First stop was to see Peach Heath. This is one of the rarer plants of our area. It is a very low-growing shrub (to about 10 cm) and has peach-coloured tube flowers. On the day of the excursion, only a few flowers could still be found. However, orchids were numerous, including Greencomb Spider-orchids, Musky Caladenias, Beard-orchids, Pink Fingers and a single Common Spider-orchid.

The second stop to see the patch of Broad-leaf Peppermint. Peppermints are quite common in the wetter forests (such as the forest east of Taradale), but only one small area is known in the Sandon Forest. The peppermints contrast quite markedly with the usual box and stringybark trees. While admiring the peppermints, a Powerful Owl was disturbed, and it flew up from the ground, over the heads of some of the party, and perched on a nearby tree. A close look at the owl was possible, even without binoculars. This is only the second record of a Powerful Owl for the district - the other being for Mt Alexander.

The leader then turned right, rather than left as intended. This proved to be a fortunate slip, as the group travelled along the track that has a stand of Mystery Wattle. Some 20 years ago Mystery Wattle (or *Acacia difformis*) was found near the Warby Ranges, and this was the only known occurrence in Victoria. Since then it has been found in many places; near Benalla, in the Whipstick, near Maryborough, near Muckleford and at Sandon. Mystery Wattle is similar in size and leaf shape to Golden Wattle. Its leaves are however, much duller and the leaves have a rather faint secondary vein above the main vein. Its flowers, in late summer or mid-winter, are quite dull and not at all showy. It seldom sets seed, and seems to regenerate mainly by root suckers. For this reason, it is usual to find the wattle growing in small clumps.

Scented Sun-orchids were in full bloom along this road.

Next stop was to see the anticlines and synclines to be found along the Captains Gully - Sandon Road.

Final stop was at the edge of the forest. The edge of a forest is often a good birding place. This area has a good stand of Hedge Wattle, and is even better than most forest edges. Cut-leaf Goodenias were found at this locality.

SPRING AT O'REILLY'S

(Having heard from Harold that "you haven't lived if you haven't been to O'Reilly's" I thought this would be an appropriate time to print this article which was first published in the Southern Riverina Field Naturalists-Club Newsletter, Feb. '88)

O'Reilly's, in Lamington National Park in South-Eastern Queensland, is truly a magical place. Situated on a small area of cleared land 3000 feet above sea level, the guest house is at the hub of the many walking tracks which radiate from it, and which traverse sub-tropical and temperate rainforest and box forest.

Spectacular waterfalls cascading down rocky gorges; sparkling creeks fringed with beautiful *Helmolzia* lilies; lush tree gardens (some displaying orchids) spread high in the overhead tree canopies; Booyongs with their huge trunks covered in a tightly woven mesh of strangler fig vines; the eerie, ethereal green light filtering through the shaggy, thread-like moss dripping from the ancient Antarctic Beech trees; the glorious western view across a never-ending vista of rugged mountain ranges - these were just some of the unforgettable sights which enthralled us on our 6-day stay at O'Reilly's.

The birding is exceptional and over the years has lured thousands of overseas "birdos" as well as home-grown ones to this wonderful place. On the guest house lawns are huge flocks of king parrots and crimson rosellas which alight on various portions of one's anatomy in the hope of a gratuitous meal of sunflower seeds. Almost as tame are the satin bowerbirds and the spectacular black and gold Regent bowerbirds. All flock to be fed outside the picture windows of the dining-room three times a day, and honey-dipped bread left out in the evenings attracts tiny sugar gliders and marsupial mice. Other inquisitive wildlife were the pademelons, or miniature kangaroos.

Some of the rarer bird varieties spotted in the rainforest were the beautiful Albert lyrebird with its bronze plumage, and the colourful Noisy Pitta, and a family of Perigrine falcons nesting on a cliff face. We were fortunate to see also the wonga pigeon, pied currawong, brush turkey, boobook owl, red-browed firetail, cat-bird (What an extraordinary call that has!), crow, magpie, Lewin honeyeater, brown thornbill, yellow-throated scrub wren, rufous fantail, grey fantail, eastern yellow robin, laughing kookaburra, welcome swallow, tawny frogmouth, masked plover, rose robin, grey crowned babbler, brown pigeon, barred cuckoo shrike, grey thrush, yellow-fronted honeyeater, blackfaced cuckoo shrike, nankeen night heron, little ~~grebe~~ grebe, rainbow lorikeet, willy wagtail, nankeen kestrel, paleheaded rosella, sulphur-crested cockatoo, scaley breasted lorikeet, crested

pigeon, peaceful dove, white-faced heron, wood duck, southern logrunner, topknot pigeon, golden whistler, satin flycatcher, brown warbler, pied butcherbird, noisy miner, white-browed scrub wren, eastern whipbird, eastern spinebill. These sightings were well worth the often considerable effort involved, and the sharing of our "finds" with so many folk with similar interests and from so many countries added to the pleasure.

Judy and Bill Metcalf.

Australian Wildflowers as Weeds?

Yes, according to -

R.H.S.V. Garden News, Oct. 1988

Species of Australian melaleuca are threatening to take over the Florida Everglades. Scientists have begun an experimental herbicide program to help stop their spread.

The thirsty tree soaks up water rapidly, and thrives in the fertilizer-enriched water of the Everglades.

The melaleuca was imported in 1906 to sow in the Everglades, which was then seen as just a mucky wasteland! It was hoped to transform the area into a timbering region.

The idea worked too well, and by the time the environmental value of the Everglades was realised, the melaleuca was beginning to take over. the tree crowds out native plants, which evolved in an era when the water contained few nutrients.

(I was also intrigued to find we also had a weed exchange with the Norfolk broads area where Bidgee-widgee is a real pest, having been introduced in wool in the late 1800's, according to my informant, who is a member of a Norfolk Field Naturalists' club.) 24.

Squatters at Chewton

Enid Hall's grandchildren can't use the cubby house she had built for them at the moment - a pair of thrushes have taken over the cubby and are busily raising series of young ones in a cardboard box on the end of a shelf. Enid commented how very tidy they are - all waste is taken outside to be disposed of. Hopefully breeding season will be over and the children can have their cubby again. At least three clutches raised ought to be enough for one year!

BIRD LIST ADDITIONS

This list gives additional records for the Castlemaine Bird List, by Gary Cheers of Maryborough F.N.C.

Hoary Headed Grebe s	Little Grebe s
Little Pied Cormorant s	Little Black Cormorant s
Australian Darter c	Pacific Heron c
White-faced Heron c	Cattle Egret t
Glossy Ibis oc	Little Bittern o
Royal Spoonbill o	Australian Shoveler c
Pink-eared Duck co	Hardhead o
Musk Duck o	Blue-billed Duck c
Black-shouldered Kite c	Whistling Kite c
Brown Goshawk s	Little Eagle c
Peregrine Falcon g	Marsh Harrier co
Spotted Harrier co	Brown Falcon o
Black-tailed Native Hen o	Dusky Moorhen c
Purple Swamphen c	Banded Lapwing t
Red-kneed Dotterel c	Silver Gull o
Long-billed Corella o	Black-eared Cuckoo y
Horsefield's Bronze Cuckoo s	Shining Bronze Cuckoo s
Tree Martin o	Kookaburra o
Rainbow Bee-eater s	White-winged Triller s
Grey Shrike-thrush s	Crested Bellbird s
Rose Robin s	Flame Robin s
Hooded Robin s	Crested Shrike-tit os
Rufous Song-lark s	Spotted Quail-thrush s
Chestnut-rumped Hylacola s	Speckled Warbler s
Weebill s	Brown Thornbill s
Buff-rumped Thornbill s	Varied Sittella s
White-throated Treecreeper s	Painted Honeyeater s
White-fronted Chat s	Mistletoe Bird s
Striated Pardalote s	Red-browed Firetail s
Dusky Woodswallow s	Olive-backed Oriole s
Grey Curawong s	

(o = Bells Swamp, c = Cairn Curran, s = Sandon,
t = Tarrengower, y = Yandoit, g = Gower)

Of these, the Darter, Little Bittern, Blue-billed Duck, Marsh Harrier, Spotted Harrier, Glossy Ibis and Banded Lapwing are new for the Bird List. A Darter has since been seen on Lake Joanna in the botanic gardens.

Other bird-list additions are

White-browed Babbler G	Little Grebe e
White-winged chough e	Powerful Owl s
Buff-rumped Thornbill E	Weebill P
Spotted Quail-thrush P	Sittella S
White-throated Tree-creeper e	Darter w

Every Spring season seems to have a flower that excels itself for that year, but this year there were several. Early in August there were masses of Pink Bells (*Tetratheca ciliata*), then more Leopard Orchids (*Diurus maculata*) than I have ever seen before at any one time, then there were hundreds of Waxlip Orchids (*Glossodia major*). At the moment the bush is thick with Milkmaids (*Burchardia umbellata*), again more than I've ever seen before at one time. The Chocolate lilies (*Dicopogon strictus*) have also put on another marvellous show for us. And there were an unusual number of Hooded and Musky Caledenias (*C. cucullata* and *C. gracilis*, syn. *angustata*). The whole season seems to have been two to three weeks earlier than the last couple of years, so those going out on the Muckleford Tours during the festival this year are seeing the bush in quite a different dress from last time.

ORCHIDS OF AUSTRALIA

"Native Orchids of Australia" is the second orchid book to be published this year. Unlike the other orchid book, this volume covers all of Australia, and is almost double the price (at \$70).

However, as book prices go, it is good value and the book might well be purchased by anyone interested in identifying orchids.

Orchid names are continuing to change, and more changes are given in the new book.

PINK FINGERS changes back to its original name, *Caladenia carnea*. *C. catenata* is now the name of White Fingers. White Fingers is a Gippsland species, and lacks the red bars on the column.

VEINED SUN-ORCHID is *Caladenia reticulatum*. *C. huegelii* is a species from Western Australia.

GOLDEN MOTHS is now *Diuris lanceolata*.

RUSTY HOOD has been listed in the Castlemaine plant list as *Pterostylis biseta*. There are a number of related species, and the correct name for our species will need to be determined.

DECORATED SUN-ORCHID. We have a spotted orchid, named in our list as *Thelymitra decora*. This species is however given as an orchid of the open forests of high altitudes.

CRIMSON SUN-ORCHID is a hybrid between Rabbit-ears and Scented Sun-orchid, and is called *Thelymitra x macmillanii*.

SLATY HELMET ORCHID is now *Corybas incurvus*. The Stately Helmet Orchid from Gippsland is now *C. diemenicus*.

MOSQUITO ORCHID has become *Cyrtostylis reniformis*.

The new orchid book is written by David L. Jones and published by Reed.

NOTES FOR OCTOBER

A DARTER has been resident at Lake Joanna, in the Castlemaine Botanic Gardens, for several weeks. Until recently, Darters were not on the Club's bird list. They have been seen at Laanecoorie and Cairn Curran.

TURQUOISE PARROTS were seen by several members of the Club at the Warby Ranges on the weekend of October 22-23rd. Darters were also seen at Lake Mokoan and at Nagambie on the same weekend.

A BROWN FALCON was seen to pick up an adolescent rabbit in Sinclairs Lane. (M.D.)

BIRDS NESTING include Babblers with young in Smiths Reef, a Spotted Pardalote nesting in a creek bank near Crocodile reservoir at Fryerstown a Sittella nesting in Shicer Gully (near Guildford).

WOOD DUCK (or Maned Geese) A small flock has been resident at Lake Joanna in the Botanic Gardens.

BLACKBIRDS AND CATS. The Blackbirds resident in Doveton Street become quite noisy when the neighbours' cat visits. The male chatters away, and flies from perch to perch, swooping low over the cat. The cat's reaction varies. Usually, it apparently ignores the blackbird, and sometimes rolls over on its back. At other times it crouches down trying to make itself invisible. On some of the swoops it suddenly becomes active, and leaps after the blackbird, or chases after it. If the cat takes too little notice the blackbird lands on the ground three or four metres from the cat, and chatters away until at last the cat chases it. The tactics appear to work, for the cat soon departs for home. The female is less involved than the male. Sometimes she helps with harassing the cat, but she seldom swoops or lands on the ground near the cat.

I have not known the cat to catch an adult blackbird, but it can catch the young birds. (E.P.)

MAIDENHAIR FERN A large patch was seen north of Crocodile reservoir, growing beside a group of rocks.

CASTLEMAINE F.N.C. AGENDA

Wed 9 Nov. BRADFORD. Meet 27 Doveton St at 4.15 p.m.
If warm weather take your tea.

Fri Nov 11. PAT BINGHAM - A CONTRAST IN ISLANDS. High School, Lawson Parade at 8.00 p.m.

Sat Nov 12. BELLS SWAMP EXCURSION. Meet S.E.C., Mostyn Street at 1.30 sharp.

Sun 13 Nov. SPRING GULLY and GLENLUCE. Excursion with Bendigo Field Naturalists Club. Meet Market car park at 10.00 a.m. Lunch at Spring Gully.

Sun 20 Nov. MOORANONG (Skipton). Possible excursion with Maryborough F.N.C. to National Trust property, and trial plots of endangered plant species of the basalt plains. See E. Perkins for details.

Thurs 24 Nov. BUSINESS MEETING. 38 Campbell Street at 7.30 p.m.

Fri 9 Dec. MEMBERS AND VISITORS NIGHT. High School at 8.00 p.m. Bring a plate.

Sat 10 Dec. FYERS RIDGE EXCURSION. See the late spring flowers on the ridge road. Leader R. Mills. Leave SEC, Mostyn St at 1.30 sharp.

Thurs 26 Jan. BUSINESS MEETING. 38 Campbell Street at 7.30 p.m. This is the first meeting of the year.

Fri 10 Feb. CENTRAL AUSTRALIA and the NORTH. Speaker is Frank Duffin. High School at 8.00 p.m. Annual meeting.

Mar 11-13 OCEAN GROVE CAMPOUT at Uniting Church camp. \$16 per day, including 3 meals. Marine biology cruise, beach walk, rock shelves, mangrove swamps, Edwards point, snorkelling, Ocean Grove nature reserve etc. A joint WVFNCA and VFNCA campout. Mark it in your diary.

Sept 8-9 W.V.F.N.C.A. campout at Castlemaine

Oct 21-23 W.V.F.N.C.A. campout at Creswick

CASTLEMAINE F.N.C. Inc. P.O. Box 324, Castlemaine 3450.

Committee: George Broadway (Pres), Barbara Maund (Sec), Maggie Oliver (VP), Rita Mills (Newsletter), Kaye Turner (Program Sec), Ern Perkins (Treas), Margaret Dunne, Geoff Sitch, Robyn Holden, Gunter Liebl, Elma Kelly.
Librarian: Lesley Perkins.
